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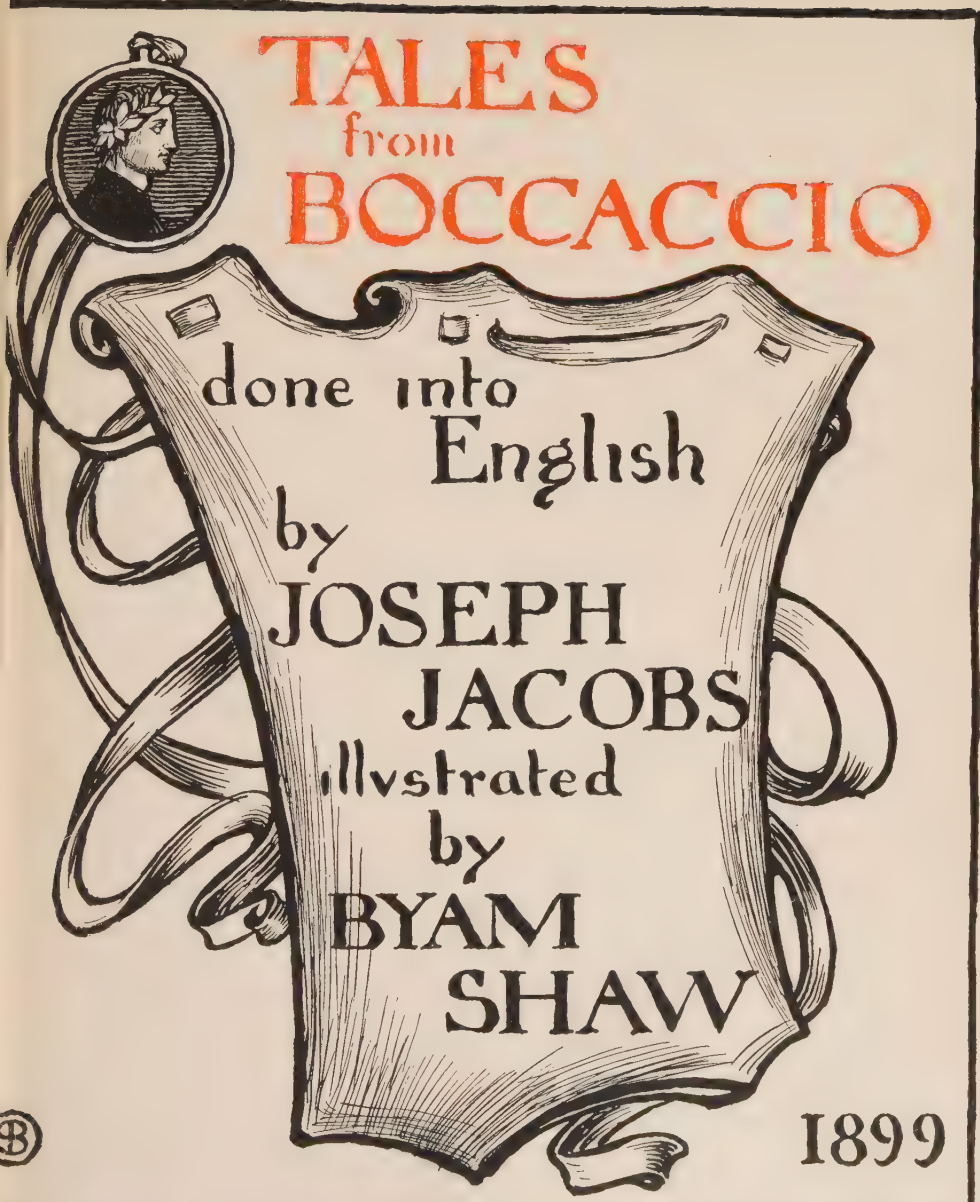
TALES
from
BOCCACCIO

Vaus & Crampton, Sc.

Frontispiece



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INTRODUCTION

IT is unfortunate that Boccaccio's reputation generally relegates him to the top shelves, whence he is only supposed to be removed furtively and at moments of weakness. That the *Decamerone* contains tales which are more broad than they are long it would be idle to deny. In Boccaccio's days such tales used to be put down on paper, and published unblushingly, instead of being confined to the oral tradition of smoking-rooms, or to "limited editions" of a thousand copies, supposed to be for private circulation only, but really as accessible as a prayer-book or a directory. Yet after all, there are only twenty-eight of the hundred tales of the *Decamerone* which need fall under the ban of the censor, and the remaining seventy-two have never been surpassed for the

mastery with which they touch all the chords of human feeling and passion, from the lightest to the most tragic.

It is, indeed, in his command of the sterner passions that move the human breast that Boccaccio has shown himself the greatest master. There is never a word wasted; he selects with consummate artistry just those acts and words of the chief actors that are best suited to produce the *καθάρσις*. He wrote at the dawn of modern literature, yet none has ever bettered, if any has ever equalled him in the art of putting narrative shortly but well. He was endowed with all the qualifications of the narrative artist—wit, natural conversation, exquisite choice of incident, easy flow of dialogue and event, are his at their highest degree; yet, because he is sometimes coarse, his masterpiece is never referred to, and only consulted stealthily. Truly virtue is its own punishment. Not that he has been neglected by real readers, and especially by those virile thinkers who held up the mirror to Nature on the stage.

Shakespeare knew and used him, so did Molière ; and his situations, not excluding those of which we ought to profess ignorance, have ruled the drama ever since it developed out of the Morality stage. Nor is the indebtedness of the drama to him entirely on account of the lighter elements. Tancred and Griselda found their way on the boards, where Masetto and Alibech never followed them. In the prose literature of Italy, which he practically founded, his method dominated for at least three centuries, and we get the name, if not the method, of the novel from the school which he brought into being.[1]

In opposition, or at least contrast, to the *Divina Commedia*, Boccaccio has given us the *Commedia Umana*, filled with as many figures, and as well drawn in their way, as that of Balzac. Yet it is probable that he himself regarded the hundred sketches of the *Decamerone* as merely slight things,

[1] I have given in the Introduction to my edition of Paynter's "Palace of Pleasure"—the story-store of Elizabethan drama—some account of the Italian *novella*.

thrown off in the intervals of the real work of his life. His was the age of encyclopædias, and it was with his Genealogy of the Gods and biographies of celebrated women, both written in Latin, that Boccaccio would probably have claimed affinity with the Muses, whom he first learned to worship (according to Villani) at Virgil's grave. It is somewhat curious to reflect also that at the somewhat mature age of forty-eight he became converted and pious, but does not seem to have taken any steps to remove the *Decamerone* from circulation. Beside all his other claims to attention, he has that of being the first of modern men to study Homer in the original, and the first of Italians to comment on Dante. Truly in the sixty-two years of his life (1313–1375) he passed through many phases, and in all of them he had an eye to the vital qualities of human life.

Nowhere has he shown this characteristic more clearly than in the four tales selected from the *Decamerone* in this volume. They all deal with the more serious aspect of Boccaccio's work, and

thus to some extent give only one side of his genius. It is that side which is less thought of in connection with him, and perhaps may come with the greater force and revelation to those who associate his name solely with smoking-room stories. Here, almost for the first time in Europe, did a writer in the vernacular attempt in prose tragic themes. Only one of the stories before us deals with the height of Boccaccio's argument. The fifth novel of the fourth day, known in the original as *Lisabetta*, but retaining here the title of *Isabella*, acclimatised in England by Keats, was probably based on some real occurrence in the land of high passions, but Boccaccio deals with his theme with the most effective conciseness, laying no exaggerated stress either on the dastardly vengeance of the brothers, or the piteous grief of his heroine. All is told simply and naturally, and the result is much more effective than the most ranting elaboration.

The story that opens our volume has become known throughout Europe by folk-song and

folk-play, till the patient Grissel has become a by-word. The wish of the men who heard the story may have been father to its popularity. If Grissel were to be regarded as a possible creation, she must be an Old Woman indeed. The story runs the older idea of a woman's place in the household to its logical and most brutal end. Only in folk-lore do we find any counterpart to Griselda's story, and there it is suspected that the Russian folk-tale given by De Gubernatis in his *Zoological Mythology* was derived indirectly from Boccaccio's tale itself. Yet in one of the Lays of Marie de France there is an incident not altogether unlike our story, in which the people of Brittany beg their Count to put aside Fraisne, and to take Coudre, her sister. The nearest parallel, however, as might have been expected, is to be found in the despotic East, which (so the ladies say) has failed to progress because it took so low a view of woman. In Miss Stokes' Indian fairy tales there is a story of a king who threatens to kill any child of his that cries, and then to kill the mother if she cries

because her child is killed. He does this twice, and it is only with the third mother that he finds the Indian "patient Grissel."

It is hard for a Western to be patient with patient Grissel. What seems to Boccaccio the highest merit strikes a modern as little less than criminal, yet few of Boccaccio's women show such want of spirit as Griselda does, and one cannot but suspect that Boccaccio had before him some folk-tale or other, rather than any experience of real life in Italy. Yet it is characteristic that Petrarch, his friend, chose this particular tale to put into Latin, and it is from Petrarch rather than Boccaccio that Chaucer derives his treatment of the subject.

But allowing for the change of opinion about woman's position in life, one cannot deny the artistry with which Boccaccio presents his theme. From the somewhat brutal speech of the Count at the beginning to the tender prayer of Griselda towards the end—that he may not treat the new wife as he had treated her—every touch is effective,

and increases our admiration for the heroine, if only we could consider her conduct natural. If one could accept the Oriental ideal of women, Griselda would indeed answer to that ideal.

A sort of companion-picture on the man's side is afforded by the story of Sir Federigo and his hawk, also included in this volume. Here the pundits like Dr. M. Landau have sought for analogues in folk-tale and Eastern story. There is indeed something Buddhistic in the supreme sacrifice of Federigo. The well-known story of Buddha offering himself as a meal for a hungry tiger—in some forms of the tale merely to satisfy the tiger's hunger, in others to relieve those who might be victims—is scarcely more striking as an example of self-sacrifice than Federigo's giving up the hawk, which was not alone his only amusement, but seemingly his only means of obtaining food. One of the Meyrick girls in *Daniel Deronda* objects that Buddha himself might have been hungry at the time, and certainly one feels a certain want of sympathy with what seems an

unnecessary sacrifice; but it is just with those sublime extravagances of feeling that the artist in narrative produces his finest effects, and one cannot wonder at the youthful Tennyson being led to translate *The Falcon* into his pellucid verse. German folk-lore gives a religious turn to the story in the tale told by Haltrich, in which a shepherd gives his solitary pet lamb for a meal to Christ and St. Peter warming themselves in his house, but with the usual consequence of receiving a whole flock instead.

Nowhere does Boccaccio's skill in tale-telling show to better advantage than in the admirable story of *Saladin*, included in this volume. In a romance of an earlier contemporary of Boccaccio's, named Busone da Gubbio, the main incident of the tale is told as having really occurred to Saladin, who, according to Busone, met in Spain with a knight named Hugo di Moncaro, who in order to force the Sultan to accept his hospitality, loosed the nails from his horses' shoes, and treated him right worthily, though he was ignorant of his

station. Afterwards, during the Crusades, he fell into Saladin's power, who set him and his companions free, and sent him home with ten thousand gold pieces. From this simple anecdote Boccaccio has developed a tale full of interest and incident. The picture of well-bred courtesy displayed in Torello's reception of the unknown Oriental stranger is full of subtle touches that give it real vitality in our minds. The care of Torello's wife to provide the strangers with fine linen, because as merchants they were probably used to that somewhat rare luxury, adds the final touch. When we are transported to the East, a change comes over the character of the story, which makes it almost unique among the tales of the *Decamerone*. We seem to be reading some incident in the Thousand and One Nights, with the quick change of status, the grandiose hospitality and generosity of the Sultan, and finally the transformation scene at the end, reminding one of Nour-ed-Din and the Fair Persian. But a few years after Boccaccio told the tale, Chaucer was to leave half told the tale

in which a magic horse conveys the hero of the Squire's Tale through the air. Similar stories are told of saints and sinners in the West, but they are mostly after contact with the East, and enabled the Occidentals to be acquainted with the aërial locomotion of Asia. One cannot but think that Boccaccio must have had some folk-tale before him, since the recognition by a ring is so frequent an incident in such narrations. The opportune arrival of Torello on the very marriage day of his wife is also a folk trait, found in many a fairy story and ballad: "Young Lochinvar" is one of the most familiar instances, though Scott probably had "Childe Horn" in memory.

But it is the skill with which Boccaccio has woven together these incidents from the stories of the folk which calls for our attention here. Notice, for example, the subtle change from the contemptuous "thou" to the respectful "you," when Saladin has his first talk with Torello at Alexandria. Observe, too, the gracious compliment which Saladin pays to Torello's wife—

the more marked as coming from a follower of Islam. The dramatic way, too, in which the discovery of Torello in the church is told interests of itself, and gets over the difficulty of the supernatural machinery; and then the combined courtesy and wit with which Torello greets the disappointed bridegroom, who would have robbed him of his wife, is all in the best style of narrative art.

The triumph is all the more marked, since one can clearly trace in the language of the story the influence of the periodic Latin in which most literary men were accustomed to make their effects. Italian with Dante had not yet obtained true ease; there was a certain stiffness in the movement of the sentences, which required a master like Boccaccio to overcome. In the lighter stories, so far as can be observed, Boccaccio breaks through, to some extent, the more formal collocation of sentences derived from Latin, but in the more serious attempts exemplified in this volume he is clearly aiming at showing that Italian can produce as much effect as the more classical tongue.

Notwithstanding this somewhat artificial method of treating his native language, he has succeeded in putting his points neatly and effectively, and with the greatest economy of word-play. If he is somewhat stiff in his narration, he is at any rate full of ease in his conversations, where it would have been impossible for him to have kept the Latin formation of sentences.

This combination of colloquial ease in conversation and periodic formation in the surrounding narration, renders the translator's task more than ordinarily difficult in the case of these tales. For two of them I have had the advantage of being able to consult Mr. John Payne's admirable version, which only errs in a somewhat unnecessary amount of archaism. It would, of course, be poor art to transfer Boccaccio into the ordinary speech of to-day, but there is a limit to the amount of quaintness which may be legitimately imported into a translation of a mediæval story, and I am inclined to think that Mr. Payne at times oversteps the limit. The ideal translation

would produce the same effect in the reader's mind nowadays as the original produced on the ordinary Italian in the fourteenth century. It is, of course, impossible to attain such an ideal, for the simple reason that some of Boccaccio's terms and thoughts are in themselves archaic, and in such cases a due use of archaisms is justifiable. In particular, nothing can be more subtle, as I have observed, than the use Boccaccio makes of the second singular and plural, and even at the risk of appearing too formal, I have throughout retained the contrast. It must be left to the reader to judge how far I have succeeded in the difficult task of being literal, and at the same time easeful, in reproducing the great Italian's words.

However ineffective my version may be, it cannot altogether fail to represent to the English reader some of the skill with which Boccaccio has told his tales. The lightness of touch, the economy of incident, the naturalness of conversation, cannot have been altogether obscured ; and all this without a single model before him. Like the French

general, Boccaccio might say, "*Je suis ancêtre.*" He is the father of all the tale-tellers of Europe since his time—whether grave or gay. Usually his name is only associated with the brighter forms of narration, but the stories before us will indicate that he has as much command over the deeper feelings and the more moving passions, as he has over the more humorous and lighter sides of human nature. He is indeed the supreme master of the *conte*.

JOSEPH JACOBS.

Here beginneth the Tale of Griselda

Vaus & Crampton, Sc.

Now this Marquis spent his time in nothing other than hawking and hunting

GRISELDA

IT chanced a long time ago that the head of the house of Saluzzo was a young man named Gualtieri. Now this Marquis, being without wife or child, spent his time in nothing other than hawking and hunting; nor had he any thought of taking a wife and having children, for which doubtless he was to be regarded as most wise. But this course did not please his subjects, who many a time prayed him to take a wife, to the end that he might not be without an heir, or they without a lord. They even offered to find him such a lady, and of such father and mother that he could have good hopes from her, and find much content in her. To them Gualtieri answered—

"My friends, you press me to do that which of all things I had proposed to myself not to do, since I have bethought me how difficult a matter it is to find one

whose habits would suit, how many there are of the opposite kind, and what a hard life that would be for him who has a wife not well suited to him. And as for your saying that you believe you can know the children from the manners of the father and mother, from which you argue that you can pick one out to please me—that is but a sorry jest. For, in the first place, I do not know how you can be certainly sure about the fathers, or how you can come at the secrets of the mothers; and even when you do know them, how often are the daughters different from both father and mother? But, nevertheless, since you wish me to be tied up in this noose, even I will be content, and to the end that I may have none to complain except myself if evil come of it, I shall myself be the chooser, and I warn you that unless you treat with honour whom-

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But this course did not please his subjects

soever I may take, you will find out at what cost you have forced me to take a wife against my own will, in answer to your petitions."

The brave fellows replied that they were content, provided only that he was willing to take a wife.

Now it happened that Gualtieri had been attracted some time before by the manners of a poor young girl, living in a town near to his estate; and as she appeared sufficiently beautiful, he thought he might pass life with her with some comfort, and therefore determined to marry her without seeking further. Summoning to him her father, who was very poor, he arranged with him to take her for his wife. This done, Gualtieri caused all his friends in the neighbourhood to be assembled, and said to them—

"My friends, it has pleased you, and

still is your pleasure, that I should dispose myself to take a wife; and now I have given way, more to please you than from any desire I have for a wife. You know what you have promised me, namely, to be content, and to honour as your lady whomsoever I may choose; and because the time is come that I am ready to keep my promise to you, I wish that you should keep yours to me. I have found a young woman after my own heart, not far from here, whom I intend to take as wife, and to lead her within a few days to my house. Let, then, the nuptial feast be a goodly one, and receive your lady with due honour, so that I may be as content with your fulfilment of your promise as you with mine."

The good folk were rejoiced, and replied that it pleased them well, and that, whoever she might be, they would take her

for their lady, and honour her in all things as such. And afterwards they all put themselves to much pains to make the day grand and joyful, and the same did Gualtieri. He let prepare the bridal on a grand scale, and invited to it many of his friends and relatives, and many great folk from round about; and he caused most rich and costly robes to be prepared from the model of a young woman who resembled in person the maiden whom he proposed to marry; and besides this, prepared girdles and rings, and a rich and beautiful crown, and everything that beseemed a new bride. And when the day came which he had fixed for the nuptials, Gualtieri at the third hour mounted his horse, and so did all those who had come to him to do him honour. And everything being prepared, he said to them, "My lords,

it is time to go for the new bride," and leading the way with all his company, he arrived at the village; and near to the house of her father he found the damsel, who was just returned from drawing water in great haste from the well, intending to go afterwards with other women to see the bride of Gualtieri arrive.

Now when Gualtieri saw her, he called her by her name, that is, Griselda, asking where her father was. She modestly replied, "My lord, he is at home." Thereupon Gualtieri dismounted, and commanding to all men that they should await him, he entered alone into the poor dwelling, where he found her father, whose name was Giannucolo, and said to him—

"I am come to wed Griselda; but first of all I desire to know from her certain things in thy presence;" and there-

upon he asked her if she would always, after he had taken her as his wife, do her best to please him, and be not angered by aught that he might say or do, and always be obedient, and other things of the like; to all of which she replied with "Yes!"

Then Gualtieri took her by the hand, led her outside, and in the presence of all his company, and of all other persons, he caused her to be disrobed, and calling for the vestments which he had had made for her, straightway caused her to be attired and shod; and upon her hair, all rumpled as it was, he caused them to place the nuptial crown; and after that, when all men were wondering at these things, he said—

"My lords! such and thus is she that I intend to have for my wife, if she wishes for me as her husband." And

then turning to her as she stood, modest and abashed, he said to her, "Griselda, dost thou wish me for thy husband?"

And she replied to him, "My lord, yes!"

And he said, "And I wish thee for my spouse." And in the presence of all, he wedded her. Then causing her to be mounted upon a palfrey, he took her to his palace with an honourable escort, and there he celebrated the bridal well and grandly; and the rejoicings were none other than if he had taken the daughter of the King of France.

The young bride seemed as if with her vesture she had changed her mind and her manner. She was, as we have already said, beautiful in person and to the sight, and even as she was so beautiful she became withal so kindly, so pleasing, so well-mannered, that she appeared not as the

daughter of Giannucolo and a shepherdess, but of the stock of some noble signor; in such wise that she made all marvel who had known her before. Beyond that, she was so obedient to her husband, and so submissive, that he thought himself the most satisfied man in the world. And likewise towards her husband's subjects she was so gracious and so benign, that there was none that did not love and honour her. All prayed heartily for her health and prosperity, and for her advancement. And whereas they used to say that Gualtieri had acted with little wisdom in taking her for his wife, they now said that he was the wisest and subtlest man in the world, for that none ever but he could have recognised her thorough virtues under her poor dress and village costume. In short, not alone in his own marquisate, but throughout the

country, before much time was passed she caused all men to speak of her exceeding worth and her good works; and if anything was said against her husband when she had been wedded by him, it was now all the other way. She had not remained long with Gualtieri before she proved with child, and in due time bore a daughter, at which Gualtieri made a great feast.

But a short time after this a new thought entered his mind, namely, to prove her patience by long trials and intolerable suffering. At first he ill-used her only with words, showing himself angered, and declaring that his subjects were ill content with her for her low condition, and especially when they saw that she was bearing children, and in their grief at the daughter she had already borne they did naught but murmur. And

when the lady heard these words, without changing her countenance or behaviour in any manner, she answered—

"My lord, do with me whatever thou dost think best for thy honour and consolation, for I shall be content with all, seeing that I know that I am the least of all thine, and that I was not worthy of that honour to the which thou hast by thy courtesy raised me."

This reply was very dear to Gualtieri, proving that she was in no manner puffed up by pride at the honour which he or others had done to her.

A short time after, having in general words told his wife that his subjects could not bear the daughter she had borne, having instructed one of his familiars, he sent him to her with a very grievous countenance, and said—

"Madam, if I am not to die, it behoves

me to do that which my lord has commanded me. He has ordered me that I should take your little girl, and that I . . ." He said no more.

The lady, hearing these words, and seeing the countenance of the familiar, and remembering her husband's words, understood that it had been ordered him to kill the little child. But at once she took it out of the little cradle, and kissing it and blessing it as if she felt great grief in her heart, without changing countenance placed it in the arms of the familiar, and said—

"Take her, and do with her entirely what thy and my lord hath commanded; only do not leave her where the beasts and birds may devour her, unless he hath commanded that too to thee."

The familiar took the little girl, and let Gualtieri know what the lady had said

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The familiar took the little girl.

to him, and he, marvelling much at her constancy, sent him with the child to one of his relatives at Bologna, begging her, without saying whose child she was, to rear her up and train her diligently.

It happened shortly afterwards that the lady was again with child, and at the due time bore a male child that was most dear to Gualtieri. But not satisfied with that which he had done, he treated the lady with still greater harshness, and with seeming anger said to her one day—

"Lady, since thou hast brought me this male child, in nowise can I live with these men of mine, so harshly do they complain that a grandson of Giannucolo shall become their lord after me, and it has come to this, that if I am not to be hunted from my own land, I must do with this what I did the time before,

and after that leave thee and take another wife."

The lady heard him with patient mind, and made no other reply than this—

"My lord, think only of contenting thyself, and of satisfying thy pleasure, and have no other thought of me, since naught is dear to me except in so far as I can see it pleases thee."

Not many days afterwards, Gualtieri, in the same manner as he had sent for the girl, sent for the boy, and in like wise pretending that he had caused him to be killed, sent him to be reared at Bologna, as he had sent the little girl. And at this the lady looked nor said otherwise than she had done with her daughter, at which Gualtieri marvelled greatly, and to himself declared that no other woman could have done what she had done. And if it had not been that she had been most

loving to the children while that pleased him, he would have thought that she had done this through not caring for them any longer, whereas he knew otherwise.

His subjects, thinking that he had caused the children to be slain, blamed him much, and considered him a cruel man, and had the greatest compassion for the lady. But she said naught to the ladies who condoled with her at her children thus dead, but that it was not hers but his pleasure who had begat them.

Several years having passed since the birth of his daughter, it seemed time to Gualtieri to make the last proof of her patience. He said to many of his men, he could no longer bear to have Griselda for wife, that he recognised that he had done a wicked and youthful thing when he had taken her, and since he could

procure a dispensation from the Pope, he intended to take another wife and let Griselda go: for which he was much blamed by many good men, but he made no answer to them except that the thing suited him. The lady, hearing these things, and fearing she must expect to return to her father's house, and perhaps to guard the sheep as she had done formerly, while seeing another lady possess him to whom she had given all her thoughts, grieved greatly to herself; but as she had borne the other mischances of fortune, so she prepared herself with a firm countenance to bear this new one.

Not long afterwards, Gualtieri caused forged letters to come from Rome, and showed them to his subjects, in which the Pope granted dispensation for him to take another wife than Griselda, and let her go. And thereupon causing her to

come before him, in the presence of many he said to her—

"Lady, by the dispensation granted me by the Pope, I can take another wife and let thee go. Since my forebears have been great gentlemen and lords of this country, whereas thine have always been workmen, I intend that thou shalt no longer be spouse of mine, but that thou shalt return to the house of Giannucolo with the dowry that thou broughtest to me; and I can then take unto myself another, found to be more suitable for me."

The lady, hearing these words not without the greatest dismay, contrary to the wont of women, kept back her tears, and replied—

"My lord, I always knew that my lowliness of condition did not in aught accord with your nobility, and in that I have been placed in the same condition

with you, I owe that to you and to God; nor have I ever held it as being given to me, but only as lent. Be pleased, therefore, to take it back, as it pleases me to please you and return it. Behold your ring, with which you espoused me: take it! You command that I take back with me the dowry which I brought: to do that needs no treasure of yours, or any purse of mine; it needs not a sumpter mule to carry it, nor have I forgotten that you took me without apparel. If you judge it honourable that that body which has borne you two children shall be seen by all, I will go unapparelled; but I pray you, in recompense for my maidenhood, which I brought hither and cannot carry back, that you be pleased that I may carry one smock alone in addition to my dowry."

Gualtieri, though he would sooner have

wept than do aught else, stood with harsh visage and said—

"One smock only mayest thou carry." And many of those around him prayed that he would give her one dress, that she might not be seen in that state who had been his wife for thirteen years and more, that she should go forth from his house thus poorly and contemptuously, if she were to go forth in her smock alone. But in vain were the prayers, so that the lady, in her smock and barefoot, without aught on her head, commended him to God and went forth from the house, and returned to her father with the tears and plaints of all those who saw her.

Giannucolo, who had never been able to believe that it could be true that Gualtieri would keep his daughter as his wife, and had been always expecting this, had kept the rags which were taken off

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on the morning that Gualtieri had wedded her. Wherefore he brought them out, and she put them on again, and devoted herself to the menial tasks of her father's house, as she had been accustomed, bearing with brave mind the fierce assaults of evil fortune.

When Gualtieri had done this, he caused it to be announced that he had taken for wife the daughter of one of the Counts of Panago, and causing great preparations to be made for the nuptials, ordered Griselda to come to him, and when she came he said—

"I am bringing this lady whom I have recently taken, and intend to do her honour in her first coming hither, and thou knowest that I have not in the palace any women who know how to set out the rooms, or to do many other things which are suitable for such a feast; and

since thou knowest better than any person the things of the house, put then in order whatever has to be done, and invite what ladies thou wilt, and receive them just as if thou wert the lady of the house; then, when the nuptials have been celebrated, thou canst go back again to thine own house."

Although these words pierced like a knife to the heart of Griselda, because she could not put aside the love she bore him so easily as she had her good fortune, she replied, "My lord, I am ready and prepared." And then she went in her tattered and coarse rags into the palace, from which she had just before gone out in her smock, commenced to sweep the rooms and put them in order, caused the arras and carpets in the reception-rooms to be got ready, put the kitchen in order, and put her hands to all things, even as if

she were a little scullery-maid of the house; and she did not rest until she had got everything ordered and arranged as it should be. And immediately afterwards she caused all the ladies of the country to be invited on behalf of Gualtieri, and began to get the feast ready. And when the day of the nuptials came, she received the ladies who came to her with all her poor rags on her back, but with the spirit and courtesy of a lady, and with a pleasant countenance.

Gualtieri, who had caused his children to be brought up carefully in Bologna, at the house of his kinswoman who was married to one of the Counts of Panago (the girl being twelve years old, and the most beautiful thing that could be seen, and the boy six), had sent to Bologna to his kinsman, praying that he would be pleased to come with this his daughter

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Griselda went cheerfully to meet her, saying, "Welcome, my lady!"

and son to Saluzzo, and to arrange a fine and honourable escort for them, and to tell every one that he was bringing the former for his wife, without saying to any one that things were in any way otherwise. The nobleman did as the Marquis bade him, and started on his way, and after several days came to Saluzzo with the maiden and with her brother, and with a noble company, just about the time of dinner, where he found all the peasants, and many of the neighbours round about, waiting for this new wife of Gualtieri. And when she had been received by the ladies, and brought to the room where the tables were set, Griselda, just as she was, went cheerfully to meet her, saying, "Welcome, my lady!"

The ladies, who had besought Gualtieri in vain that Griselda might be in a room by herself, or that she might have one

of the robes that she had previously had, so that she should not go thus before strangers, were set to table, and they commenced to serve. The young girl was looked upon by all, and each one said that Gualtieri had made a good exchange; but among the rest Griselda praised her much, both her and her little brother.

Gualtieri, having at last thought that he had seen enough of his wife's patience, and seeing that in no way did change of circumstances change her, and being certain that this was not through any stupidity of mind—because he knew that she was most wise—thought it was about time to remove that bitterness which he knew she felt beneath her steadfast aspect. So he ordered her to come to him, and in presence of all men said to her with a smile, "What thinkest thou of our spouse?"

"My lord," replied Griselda, "she pleaseth me right well, and if it be that she is as wise as she is beautiful, which I fully believe, I do not doubt that you may live with her the happiest lord in the world. But I pray you with all my heart that you do not inflict upon her such pangs as you gave that other that was yours; for I hardly think she could possibly bear it, since she is younger, and brought up in all tenderness, whereas that one was accustomed to continual hardship from a little girl."

Gualtieri, seeing that though she firmly believed that this one was to be his wife, she did not speak to him less than well, caused her to be set at his side, and said to her—

"Griselda, it is now time for thee to reap the fruit of thy long patience, and for those who have thought me cruel and

unjust, and a beast, to know that what I have done has been done with this end in view, that thou mightest learn to be a wife, and that they might know how to choose and keep one, while I should gain for myself perpetual peace while I have to live with thee, which when I came to take a wife I had great fear I should never possess. Wherefore, in order to prove thee, I have tried and entreated thee harshly in all ways, and now, since I am assured that neither in word nor in deed hast thou in any way departed from my pleasure, and it appears to me that I have from thee that very happiness which I desire, I intend to render to thee in one hour all that I have taken away from thee in many days, and to soothe with the greatest sweetness the pangs which I caused thee. Therefore with joyful mind know that this girl whom thou didst take

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The ladies took off her rags and clothed her in a noble robe

for my wife, as well as her brother, are our children—thine and mine. These are the same whom thou and many others long ago thought that I had cruelly caused to be killed, and I am thy husband, that love thee above all things, being assured that no other man can be so content with his wife as I am."

And this said, he embraced her and kissed her, and together with her, who now fell a-weeping from very joy, arose and went where their daughter, all astounded at hearing these things, was seated, and embracing her tenderly, and her brother also, explained all things to her and the many others who were there. The ladies joyfully rose from the tables, and went with Griselda into another room, and as a good omen, took off from her her rags, and clothed her in a noble robe of her own, and brought her back

with them, doing honour to her as a lady, which indeed she had appeared even amidst her rags; and then they made a marvellous feast with her children, every one being rejoiced at these things, so that the joy and feasting were spread over many days; and Gualtieri was thought most wise, although the trials of his lady were held much too severe and intolerable. But, above all, Griselda was held to be the wisest of women.

The Count of Panago, after some days, returned to Bologna, and Gualtieri, taking Giannucolo from his work, placed him in a proper position as his father-in-law, where he lived honourably and in great comfort to the end of his old age. And after this Gualtieri married his daughter to one of high degree, and lived long and satisfied with Griselda, honouring her as much as ever he could.

Here endeth
the Tale of
Griselda

Here beginneth the Tale of Saladin and Torello

SALADIN & TORELLO

SOME say that at the time of the Emperor Frederick the First, a general Crusade was undertaken by the Christians to regain the Holy Land. Now Saladin, a most valiant lord, and at that time Soldan of Babylon, heard of this a great time before, and proposed to himself to see in person the preparations of the Christian lords for that Crusade, so that he might the better provide against it. Having set all things aright in Egypt, he made semblance of going upon a pilgrimage, and set out in guise of a merchant with two of his most important and discreetest men, and with three attendants. After having passed through many Christian provinces, it chanced that as they were riding through Lombardy to cross over to the other side of the mountains, they came from Milan towards Pavia about vesper time, and

encountered a gentleman from Pavia, who had to name Messer Torello d'Istria. Now he was going with his attendants, and with dogs and falcons, to spend some time at a beautiful place he had upon the Tesino. And when Messer Torello saw them, he recognised that they were gentlemen and strangers, and felt desirous to do them honour. Wherefore when Saladin asked one of his servants how far it was thence to Pavia, and if he could get thither in time to enter the gates, Torello did not allow his attendant to answer, but replied himself—

"My lords, you cannot get to Pavia in time to enter therein."

"If that be so," said Saladin, "be pleased to inform us, since we are strangers, where we can best put up."

Messer Torello said, "That will I do most willingly. I have just in mind to

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Encountered a gentleman from Pavia

send one of these men of mine to the neighbourhood of Pavia for a certain matter. I will send him with you, and he will take you to a place where you can pass the night fairly conveniently."

Then turning to the most discreet of those accompanying him, he impressed upon him what he had to do, and sent him off with them; while he himself, proceeding to his place quickly, as best he might, ordered to be prepared a fair supper, and to set the tables for it in a garden nook; and this done, he went to the gate to look out for them.

His servant, meanwhile, conversing with the gentlemen on various matters, took them round by certain byways, and conducted them to the place of his lord, without their surmising it. And when Messer Torello saw them, he went to meet them on foot, and said to them, with a smile—

"My lords, you are very welcome."

Saladin, who was himself one of the subtlest of men, guessed that the cavalier had doubted whether they would have accepted his invitation if he had invited them when he first came across them, and had therefore had them conducted round to his house by a device, so that they could not refuse to pass the night with him. Accordingly he answered his salute, and said—

"Sir, if a man could complain of men of courtesy, we might bring it up against you that (quite apart from keeping us somewhat from our way) you have obliged us to accept such noble courtesy as this of yours, without having in any way merited so well, save by a simple salutation."

The cavalier, being a wise and well-spoken man, said—

"My lords, 'tis but a poor courtesy

that you are receiving from me, compared with that which befits you, so far as I can judge by your appearance, but in very deed, outside Pavia you could have been received in no place that was worthy; wherefore take it not ill that you have gone a little out of your way, in order to have a little less discomfort." And as he thus spoke, his people came around them, and, when they were dismounted, took charge of their horses.

Messer Torello led the three gentlemen to the chambers prepared for them, where he caused them to be relieved of their boots, and to be refreshed somewhat with wine most cool and delectable. He kept them engaged in gentle conversation until time was for taking supper. Saladin and his companions and attendants all knew Latin, so that they both understood and were understood right well; and this

cavalier seemed to them the most pleasing and polite man, besides being the best talker that any one of them as yet had ever seen. On the other hand, Messer Torello was convinced that they were men of great station, and of much more account than he had previously thought, so that he grieved within himself that he could not honour them that even with worthy company and a more stately entertainment. Nevertheless, it was in his thought to make it up the following morning, and having told one of his attendants what he wished done, sent him to his wife, who was most wise and of a noble spirit, and who was then in Pavia, which was very near, and where no gate is ever locked.

And after this, leading the gentlemen into the garden, he courteously asked them who they were. Whereat Saladin answered—

"We are merchants of Cyprus, and we come therefrom, and go to Paris for our needs."

Then said Messer Torello, "Please God that our country may produce such gentlemen as I see Cyprus produces merchants."

And after such talk on other subjects for a while, the time came for supper, whereupon he entreated them to do the honours in placing themselves at table in due rank; and then they were served with a supper sufficiently goodly and in due order, considering that it was but improvised. Not long after the tables had been removed, Messer Torello, perceiving that they were weary, put them to repose in most stately beds, and himself in like manner, a little after, went to sleep.

The servant who had been sent to Pavia did his errand with the lady, who had a spirit not like that of a woman,

but of a king, and she, in no housewifely spirit, but on a princely scale, ordered to be summoned a goodly number of the friends and household of Messer Torello, and got ready a banquet with everything most fit and on a grand scale. Also she caused to be invited to the banquet, by light of torch, many of the most noble citizens, and brought out cloths and silks and furs, and put completely in due order all that her husband had sent for her to do.

At daybreak the gentlemen arose. Messer Torello mounted his horse and went with them, and having caused his falcons to be brought to him, he led them to a neighbouring ford, where he showed them how the flight took place. But when Saladin asked for some one to conduct them to Pavia, and the best inn there, Messer Torello said—

"I will be he, since I must thither myself."

They, believing him, were content, and together with him took their way.

It was about the third hour when they came to the city, and thinking that they were being led to the best inn, they arrived with Messer Torello at his own house, where already over fifty of the nobler citizens had come to receive the gentlemen, and these were soon engaged upon their bridles and stirrups; which thing when Saladin and his comrades saw, they understood too well how the matter was, and said—

"Messer Torello, this is not what we asked of you. Enough, surely, have you done this last night—much more, indeed, than we desired. Wherefore ye might with reason let us proceed upon our way."

To this Messer Torello answered, "My

lords, for that which was done yestreen I was more indebted to fortune than to you, in that I found you on the road at an hour when you must needs come to my poor house, but for that which may take place now, this morning, I shall be beholden to you, and together with me, all these gentlemen who are about you ; but if you think you can with courtesy refuse to dine with them, ye may do so an you will."

Saladin and his friends, being conquered by this, dismounted, and being received joyously by the gentlemen, were led to their rooms, which had been most richly apparelled for them, and having put off their riding apparel and refreshed themselves somewhat, they came to the saloon, which had been splendidly prepared. Water having been poured upon their hands, and having been put at table in

the most stately order and seemliest, they were served with much magnificence from many meats, so much so, that if the Emperor himself had come there, they could not have done him more of honour ; and although Saladin and his company were great lords, and used to seeing things on a great scale, nevertheless they marvelled much at this, and it appeared to them all the greater, having respect to the quality of the cavalier, whom they knew was a mere citizen and no lord.

The eating finished, and the tables removed, after they had talked of other things awhile, the heat being great, the gentlemen of Pavia all went to take their repose at Messer Torello's desire. He himself, being left alone with those three, entered into a room with them, and so that there might remain nothing dear to him which they had not seen, caused his

worthy wife to be summoned. And she came before them and pleasantly saluted them, being most beauteous and tall in person, arrayed in rich vestments, and having on either side her two little boys, who seemed like two angels. And they, seeing her, rose to their feet and received her with due deference, and caused her to sit among them, and made merry with her two fine boys. Now, while she was engaged in pleasant conversation with them, Torello departed for a short time, and she in courteous wise asked whence they came and whither they were going, and to this the gentlemen made the same reply as they had given to Messer Torello. Then the lady said with joyful visage—

"Then I see that my woman's wit will be of use. Wherefore I pray you to do me a special grace, not to refuse nor

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He caused his worthy wife to be summoned

reckon lightly this little gift which I am about to have sent for; but if you bethink you that women, with their little heart, can give but little things, pray take it, having regard to the goodwill of her that gives, rather than to the greatness of the gift."

Thereupon she caused to be brought for each of them two robes, one lined with silk, and the other with miniver, by no means the garb of citizens or of merchants, but of lords, and besides these, three doublets of taffety and linen therewith. And she said—

" Take these. I have clothed my own lord in robes like yours. As for the other things, considering that you are far away from your ladies, and the length of road you have passed through, and that which is still to come, and that merchants are somewhat delicate and nice, you may

possibly care for them, though they be of little worth."

The stranger gentlemen marvelled much, and clearly saw that Messer Torello wished to leave undone no part of courtesy towards them; and when they saw the splendour of the robes (far above the quality of merchants), they were even in doubt whether they had been recognised of him. But one of them merely replied to the lady—

"These, madam, are very fine things, and not so easily to be accepted, but that your prayers force us thereto, seeing that it is impossible to say 'No' to them."

This done, and Messer Torello having already come back, the lady, commending them to God, took her leave of them, and caused their attendants to be provided with similar things, suitable for their condition. Messer Torello, with many

tears, prevailed on them to remain the whole day with him, wherefore, after having slept awhile, they went cavalcading through the city, clothed in their new robes ; and the hour of supper come, they supped in splendour amid a very honourable company, and retired to bed at the due time.

At daybreak they arose, and found, instead of their weary rouncies, three great palfreys and good ones, and in like manner fresh horses and strong for their attendants. And when Saladin saw this thing, he turned to his companions, and said—

"I swear to God that a more accomplished man, or more courteous, or more considerate, there never was, and if the kings of Christendom are in like manner kings as this one is a cavalier, there is no chance for the Soldan of Babylon

to stand up even against one — not to speak of the many whom we see making ready to march against him."

Then, knowing that there were no means of refusing this gift, they thanked him for it with due courtesy, and mounted horse.

Messer Torello with a great company accompanied them out of the city for a great part of the way, and although it grieved Saladin sore to part from Messer Torello, so much had he grown to love him, yet, being compelled to press on, he begged him to turn back, and he, hard though it was for him to part from them, said—

"Gentlemen, I will do that, since it pleaseth you, but this thing I wish to say: who ye are I know not, nor do I ask to know more than it pleaseth you to tell me, but be ye who ye may, that

ye are merchants ye cannot cause me to believe, at this or any other time, and so to God I commend you."

Saladin, after having taken leave of all Messer Torello's companions, answered him, and said—

"Sir, it may possibly perchance that we may cause you to see some of our merchandise, by which we may confirm your belief, but now God be with you."

Thus Saladin, with his companions, parted from them with the fullest intention that if life lasted, and if the war which he expected did not prevent him, to do at some time no less honour to Messer Torello than he had done unto him; and often he would speak to his companions of him, and of his lady, and of all their things and acts and deeds, much commending everything.

But after he had encircled, not without

great fatigue, the whole of the West, he took ship with his companions, and returned to Alexandria, and being fully instructed, put himself to the defence. Messer Torello returned to Pavia, and for long was in thought who these three might be, but never reached the truth, nor even approached it.

When the time came for the Crusade, and great preparations were being made on all sides, Messer Torello, notwithstanding the prayers of his lady, and her tears, determined altogether to go thither. Having got everything ready, and being about to ride away, he said to his lady, whom he greatly loved—

"Lady, as thou seest, I go on this Crusade, as well for my body's honour as for my soul's safety. To thee I commend our affairs and our honour, and because I am sure of the going, but have no

certainty of returning for thousands of chances that may hap, I wish that thou mayest do me one favour : that whatever may befall me, if thou have no certain news of my being alive, thou shalt wait a year and a month and a day before marrying again, reckoning from this day, upon which I depart."

The lady, sorely weeping, replied, " Messer Torello, I know not how I shall bear the grief in which your parting from me leaves me, but since life may prove stronger than grief, an anything befall you, live and die assured that I shall live and die the spouse of Messer Torello, and of his memory."

To whom Messer Torello answered, " Lady, most sure I am that, as far as in thee lies, what thou hast promised will come to pass, but thou art a youthful lady and a beautiful, and of high birth,

and thy worth is great and known to all; wherefore I doubt not that many great and noble men—should aught be thought to have befallen me—will demand thee from thy brothers and thy kinsmen. Nor wilt thou be able to protect thyself from their importunities; but thou wilt perforce be obliged to comply with their desire, and this is the reason why I ask of thee that space of time and no more."

The lady answered, "I will do what I can as regards what I have told you, but if it befall me to do otherwise, I will surely obey you in that which you command me. But I pray God that He bring neither you nor me to such straits in the time to come."

Having said these words, the lady embraced Messer Torello in tears, and drawing from her finger a ring, gave it to him, saying—

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Torello, saying adieu to everyone, started on his journey

"If it chance that I die before that I see you again, remember me whensoe'er you look upon it."

Torello, taking it, mounted his horse, and saying adieu to every one, started on his journey, and arriving at Genoa with his company, embarked at once on a galley, and in a short time arrived at Acre, where he joined the rest of the army of the Christians. Almost at once there broke out a most severe pestilence and mortality. During this, whether it be through the skill or the good fortune of Saladin, almost all the rest of the Christians who had escaped from it were captured without risk, and were divided and imprisoned in many cities. Among those who were taken was Messer Torello, and he was placed in prison at Alexandria. There, being unknown, and fearing to make himself known, he was constrained

by his need to take to the training of hawks, of which he was a great master. By this means he came to the notice of Saladin, wherefore he took him from prison, and retained him as his falconer. Messer Torello, not being called by any other name than "the Christian" (for he did not recognise the Soldan, nor the Soldan him), kept his thoughts fixed upon Pavia, and made many attempts to flee, but they were of none avail.

Now, certain Genoese having come as ambassadors to Saladin to ransom certain of their fellow-citizens, and being about to depart, he thought to write to his lady, how that he was alive, and would return to her as soon as possible, and that she should await him. Having done this, he sorely begged one of the ambassadors, whom he knew, to arrange that this should come to the hand of the Abbot

of San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro, who was his uncle.

Things being in this state, it chanced one day that when Saladin was talking with Messer Torello about his hawks he commenced to smile, and made a movement with his mouth which Saladin had much noted when he was in his house at Pavia, and by this act Messer Torello was recalled to Saladin's mind, and he began to look at him fixedly, and he seemed to him the same. Wherefore, leaving his first topic, he said—

"Tell me, Christian, from what country art thou of the West?"

"My lord," said Messer Torello, "I am a Lombard from a city called Pavia —a poor man, and of low condition."

When Saladin heard this, he became certain of what he had been doubtful about, and said joyfully to himself, "God

has given me the opportunity to show this man how much his courtesy pleased me;" and without saying more, having caused all his garments to be placed in one chamber, he took him thither, and said—

"Look, Christian, if among these robes is any that thou hast seen before."

Messer Torello began to look, and saw those which his lady had given to Saladin, but could not imagine that they could be the same; nevertheless he replied—

"My lord, I recognise none; but it is true that those two resemble robes with which I was once clothed, and likewise three merchants who came to my house."

Then Saladin could no longer contain himself, but tenderly embraced him, and said—

"You are Messer Torello d'Istria, and I am one of the three merchants to whom

your lady gave these robes, and now the time is come to resolve your doubts as to my merchandise, as I told you might come to pass when I parted from you."

When Messer Torello heard this, he commenced, though rejoiced at having had such a guest, to be ashamed of what he had done, in that it seemed to him that he had received the Soldan so poorly, but Saladin said to him—

"Messer Torello, since God has sent you to me, believe henceforth that not I, but you, are lord here." And making much of him, he caused him to be attired in royal garments, and bringing him into the presence of all his greater barons, and having said many things in praise of his valour, he commanded that he should be held in as much honour by any one to whom his favour was precious, as if he were he himself. And this henceforth

every one did, but above all, the other two lords who had been together with Saladin in Torello's house.

The sudden height of glory at which Messer Torello now found himself drove somewhat the affairs of Lombardy out of his thoughts, and that chiefly because he strongly hoped that his letters had reached his uncle. Now it chanced that in the camp of the Christian army, on the day when it was captured by Saladin, a Provençal cavalier of little worth had died and been buried, who had name Messer Torello di Dignes, and from this, since Messer Torello d'Istria was known throughout the army for his nobleness, whoever heard said that Messer Torello was dead, believed that it was Messer Torello of Istria, and not he of Dignes, and the captivity which took place immediately after did not permit the persons

deceived to be undeceived. Thus many of Italy returned with that news, and among them men so bold as to dare say that they had seen him dead, and been at his funeral. And when this thing became known to his lady and his kinsmen, it caused the greatest and most unmeasured grief, not alone to them, but to all who had known him. Long it were to show what and how great was the grief and sorrow and the wailing of his lady, but after some months, during which her sorrow continued, but had begun to grow less, her brothers and other kinsfolk began to beg her to marry again, seeing that she was asked for by many of the noblest men in Lombardy. And after she had oft and with many tears said "No," she was at last obliged to agree to that which her kinsmen wished, but on the condition that she should remain without going to

a husband as long as she had promised Messer Torello.

While in Pavia the affairs of this lady were at such a pass that the last week of the time when she would have to go to her new husband was near, it chanced that Messer Torello in Alexandria saw one day one of the men whom he had seen go aboard the galley with the Genoese ambassador, when it was going to Genoa; and causing him to be summoned to him, he asked how the voyage had turned out, and when they had arrived at Genoa. But the other said—

"My lord, it was an ill voyage the galley made, as I heard in Crete, where I remained, for when it was near Sicily there arose a dangerous wind from the north, which drove her on to the sands of Barbary. Not a single one escaped,

and among the rest my two brothers there perished."

Messer Torello, believing his words, since they were most true, and remembering that the period was within a few days run out which he had asked from his lady, and knowing that nothing of his condition could be known at Pavia, felt convinced that his wife must be married again; whereon he fell in such great grief that he lost all appetite, and taking to his bed, determined to die. And when Saladin learned this thing, since he loved him most dearly, he came to him, and by many prayers and urgent, learned from him the reason of his grief and illness. He blamed him much that he had not told him before, and then prayed him to be comforted, assuring him that if he did so, he would try all things that he should be at Pavia at the time

stated, and told him how. Messer Torello, believing Saladin's words, and having many times heard that such was possible, and had even been done times enough, began to take heart, and to beg Saladin to use despatch.

Saladin ordered a necromancer, whose art he had already experienced, that he should find a way so that Messer Torello should be transported to Pavia on a couch in one night. The necromancer answered that this could be done, but that for his own sake he should put him to sleep. This being ordered, Saladin returned to Messer Torello, and finding him above all things desirous to be in Pavia at the time given, if that were possible, and if not, to die at once, spake to him thus—

" Messer Torello, in that you love your wife with great affection, and would not

that she become another's, God knows that I in no way blame you therefor, since of all the women I have chanced to see, she it is whose manners, bearing, and character—let alone her beauty, which is but a short-lived flower—appear to me most worthy to be praised and held dear. It would have been most pleasant to me, since good fortune had brought you to me, that for the time that you and I might live, we might have been together, equal lords in the government of the kingdom which I hold; but since that cannot be granted to me by God, since it has befallen you to be minded either to die or to return at the stated time to Pavia, I should have desired to have known it in time, so that I could have caused you to be carried to her house with as much honour, grandeur, and escort, as your worth deserves; but since

that cannot be granted to me, and you desire to be there at once, I will send you thither as I can, in the way in which I have told you."

Then said Messer Torello to him, "My lord, apart from your words, your deeds have sufficiently proven unto me your goodwill, which surely was never merited by me in so high a degree; so that I should live and die assured most certainly of what you have just said, even if you had not said it. But since I am thus determined on departure, I pray you that what you have spoken of doing may be done quickly, since to-morrow is the last day that I can be expected."

Saladin said that this should be done without fail, and the following day, intending to send him away the same night, he caused to be made, in a lofty antechamber, a goodly and richly-bedecked

bed of mattresses, all according to the usage of the Saracens, of velvet and cloth of gold, and laid above it a counterpane bedight with certain designs in pearls of great size and stones of precious value, which were after reckoned as a priceless treasure, besides two pillows suitable for a bed thus decorated. This done, he caused Messer Torello, who was already recovered, to be robed in Saracen-wise, in a garment the richest and most goodly which had ever been seen by any one, while around his head he caused to be wrapped one of his fullest turbans.

The hour being already late, Saladin, with many of his barons, betook himself to the chamber where Messer Torello already was, and placing himself by his side, began to speak to him, almost in tears—

"Messer Torello, the hour which is

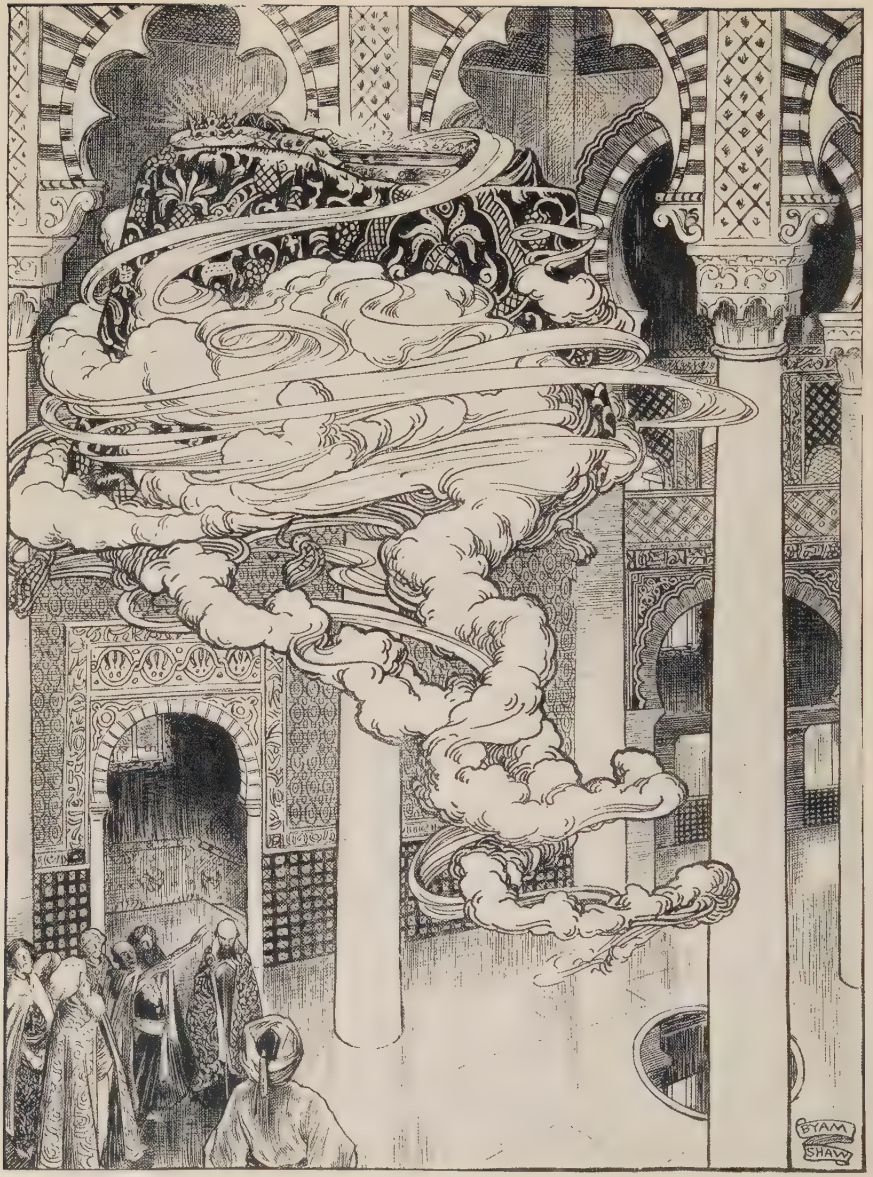
now to divide us two approaches, and since I cannot accompany you myself, nor cause you to be escorted, on account of the journey which you have to make, which does not allow of it, here in this room it behoves me to take leave of you, for which purpose I am hither come. Wherefore firstly I commend you to God, and pray you, by that love and that friendship which is between us, that you will remember me, and, if possible, may come at least once more to see me before our days run out, having put in order your affairs in Lombardy, so that besides the pleasure of seeing you again, I may supply whatever is wanting in the scant preparations I can make owing to your haste ; but, till that time arrives, do not take it ill to visit me by means of letters, and wherein you may request those things which may please you, I will certainly do

them more willingly for you than for any man that lives."

Messer Torello could not keep back the tears, and since he was restrained by them, he answered in but few words, that it was impossible that the Soldan's kindness and worth could ever fail to be borne in mind, and that he would, without fail, do what he had commanded him, if the time should be granted him. Whereupon Saladin, having tenderly embraced him and kissed him, said to him with many tears, "God be with you," and went out of the chamber. And all the other barons afterwards took leave of him, and went with Saladin into the ante-chamber where they had prepared the bed.

It being now already late, and the necromancer, having waited a space, was for hurrying the matter, a leech came

with a beverage, and making show that he was giving it to him to strengthen him, made him drink thereof; nor was it long before he fell into sleep. And while asleep, he was carried by Saladin's commands to his goodly bed, upon which he had placed a large and beautiful crown of great value, with an inscription clearly showing that it was sent from Saladin to Messer Torello's lady. Afterwards he put upon Torello's finger a ring, upon which was fixed a carbuncle so bright that it seemed to be a living torch, and the value of it could scarcely be estimated. Moreover, he caused a sword to be girt about him, the trappings of which were of no slight value. On his breast he caused to be placed a coat of mail, on which were pearls, the like of which had never been seen, with a great quantity of other precious stones. And on either



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The bed, with Messer Torello, was taken entirely away

side of him he placed two huge basins of gold, full of doubloons, with many strings of pearls, and rings and girdles and other matters, which to recount would be too long. This done, once more he kissed Messer Torello, and then bade the necromancer make speed, whereupon incontinently, in presence of the Soldan, the bed, with Messer Torello, was taken entirely away, while Saladin and his barons were left talking of him.

Messer Torello was put down, as he had requested, in the church of San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro, in Pavia, with all the above-mentioned jewels and ornaments. And while he was still sleeping, and matins were being rung, the sacristan entered the church with a light in his hand, and it happening to him to see suddenly this rich bed, not alone he marvelled thereat, but he had the greatest

fear, and turning back, fled. And when the Abbot and monks saw him fleeing, they marvelled, and asked the reason. The monk told it.

"Oh," said the Abbot, "thou art not a little child, nor new to the church, that thou shouldst be so easily affrighted. Now let us go and see who has thus played bogey with thee."

Whereupon, lighting more lights, the Abbot, with all his monks, entered the church, and there saw that bed so marvellous and rich, and on it the sleeping knight. And while they in fear and trembling were looking upon the noble appointments (though without approaching the bed), it happened that the effect of the beverage had come to an end, and Messer Torello awoke and gave a great sigh. The monks, when they saw this, and the Abbot with them, being affrighted,

all took to flight, crying out, "Lord, deliver us!" Messer Torello opened his eyes, and looking around him, recognised that he was clearly in the place where he had asked Saladin to send him, at which he was full content. Thereupon he rose and sat up, and observing particularly what he had about him, whatever he had at first thought of the generosity of Saladin, it now appeared to him still greater when he had recognised it more. Nevertheless, without making any further movement, and perceiving the monks fleeing, and guessing wherefore, he began to call by name the Abbot, and to beg him not to be in fear, since he was Torello, his nephew. The Abbot, hearing this, became yet more fearful, since he had held him for dead many months before; but being reassured by various signs, and hearing himself still called, he

made the sign of the Cross and went to him.

Then Messer Torello said to him, "My father, wherefore do ye fear? I am alive, by God's mercy, and am come back hither from across the sea."

The Abbot, although he had a long beard, and was dressed in the Arab mode, after a while recognised him, and being all reassured, took him by the hand, and said—

"My son, thou art welcome." And went on to say, "Thou must not marvel at this our fear, since there is not in all this land a man that does not firmly believe that thou art dead; so much, indeed, that I have to tell thee that Madam Adalieta, thy spouse, overcome by the prayers and threats of her kinsfolk, and contrary to her own wish, has been married again, and this very morning

is to go to her new husband, and the nuptials and all that is needed for the feast have been got ready."

Messer Torello rose at once from his rich bed, and having rejoiced marvellously with the Abbot and all the monks, prayed them that of his return none should speak, until he had done what he had designed to do. And after this, having put the rich jewels in safety, he told the Abbot all that had happened to him up to that time. The Abbot, rejoicing in his good fortune, rendered thanks unto God together with him. After which Messer Torello asked the Abbot who was the new husband of his wife. The Abbot told him.

Then Messer Torello said, "Before my return is known, I wish to see how my wife bears herself in these nuptials, and therefore, although it is not the custom

for persons of religion to go as guests to such feasts, I wish, by your love of me, that you should arrange that we may go together."

The Abbot replied that he was willing, and at daybreak sent to the new husband, saying that he wished to be at the nuptials with a companion, and the gentleman replied that it would much please him.

The time being come for the breakfast, Messer Torello, in his habit as he was, went with the Abbot to the house of the new husband, regarded with wonderment by all who saw him, but recognised of none, for the Abbot said to all that he was a Saracen sent by the Soldan to the King of France as ambassador. Messer Torello was thereupon placed at a table opposite to his lady, whom he regarded with the greatest of pleasure, and whose countenance seemed troubled at these

nuptials. She, in her turn, looked at him from time to time, not from any recognition that she had of him, since his great beard and foreign dress, and the firm belief she had that he was dead, prevented her. But when the time came that Messer Torello wished to try if she bore him in mind, he took off the ring which had been given to him by his lady when he had parted from her, and calling a young lad who was serving before him, said to him—

"Say on my part to the new bride that in my country it is a custom, when any stranger such as I am here joins in the bridal feast of a new bride such as she is, that she, in sign of holding welcome him who has come to the feast, shall send to him the cup from which she drinks full of wine, and when the stranger has drunk as much as pleases him, she shall

drink the rest that is sent back to her in the cup once more covered."

The lad did his message to the lady, who, being both wise and well-mannered, and believing him to be some great personage, in order to show her pleasure at his coming, caused a great gilt cup which she had before her to be first washed and then filled with wine, and carried to the gentleman, and thus was it done. Messer Torello, having put her ring in his mouth, so managed that as he drank he let it fall into the cup without any one noticing, and leaving but little wine in it, covered the cup again, and sent it to the lady. She took it and uncovered it, so that she might carry out that custom, and put it to her mouth, and then saw the ring, and without saying anything, looked upon it somewhat ; and recognising that it was the ring that she had given to Messer

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P. 79

Running to the table where he was seated, she threw herself across

Torello when he went away, took it, and looked fixedly at him whom she had thought to be a stranger. And recognising him, she became as if distraught, and throwing the table she had before her to the ground, called out, "This is my lord; this is in very sooth Messer Torello!" And running to the table where he was seated, without having regard to her clothes, or to anything that was on the table, she threw herself across it as far as she could, and embraced him closely, nor could she be taken from his neck by deed or word of any one that was there, until she was told by Messer Torello that she should contain herself somewhat, since there would be time enough later on for her to embrace him.

Thereupon she rose up, and the nuptials by this time being all disturbed—though in as joyful a manner as could be—by the

return of such a true knight, at his request every one remained quiet, while Messer Torello told them all everything that had happened to him, from the day of his departure up to that time, and finished by saying that the gentleman who had taken his own lady for his wife when he thought him dead, ought not to be displeased to give her up now that he was alive.

The new husband, although somewhat mortified, frankly, and like a friend, replied that it rested with him to do what he liked with his own. The lady thereupon put off the ring and crown which she had from the new husband, and put on that which she had taken from the cup, and at the same time the crown sent to her by the Soldan, and issuing from the house where they were, with all the pageant of a wedding, they went at last

to the house of Messer Torello, and there he rejoiced by a long and joyful feast his disconsolate friends and kinsmen, and all the citizens, who looked upon his return as a miracle.

Messer Torello then gave of his jewels to him that had had the expense of the nuptials, and to the Abbot, and to many others, and informed Saladin by more than one message of his happy return to his own country, though still reckoning himself his friend and servant, and he lived many years more with his worthy lady, using yet more hospitality than heretofore. Such then was the end of the troubles of Messer Torello, and of his dear lady, and the guerdon of their ready and pleasant courtesy. Many there are that try to do likewise, since they have the wherewithal, but do it so badly that they cause those to whom they extend

their benefits rather to purchase them for much more than they are worth. Wherefore, if no reward follow, neither they nor others ought by any means to marvel thereat.

Here endeth
the Tale of
Saladin and Torello

Here beginneth
the Tale of
Sir Federigo's Hawk

Vaus & Crampton, Sc. *P. 87*

Now he, as happens with most gentlemen, fell in love

SIR FEDERIGO'S HAWK

SOME time ago, there was in Florence a young man named Federigo, son of Messer Filippo Alberighi, who was in deeds of arms and in courtesy distinguished above any other squire in Tuscany. Now he, as happens with most gentlemen, fell in love, and with a lady named Monna Giovanna, who was in her time held to be among the most beautiful and graceful women in Florence. And to the end that he might gain her love, he fought in tilts and tourneys, gave entertainments, and made presents, expending his means without the slightest moderation. But she, not less pure than beautiful, cared naught for the things which he did for her, nor for him that did them. Spending therefore right and left with all his might, and acquiring nothing, as easily happens, Federigo's riches vanished and he became

a poor man, with no other possessions remaining to him save two—a small farm, which yielded him a spare living, and a falcon, one of the best in the world. Wherefore, more in love than ever, but being no longer able to live in the city as he would have wished, he went to dwell at Campi, where was his farm. Here he patiently bore his poverty, hawking when possible, and asking nothing of anybody.

Now it chanced one day, after Federigo had been reduced to this extremity, that the husband of Monna Giovanna fell ill, and seeing that he was about to die, he made his will, by which, being very rich, he left his inheritance to his son, who was already a great lad, and after him, having greatly loved Monna Giovanna, he substituted her as his heir, if his son should chance to die without legitimate

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Having many times seen the flight of Federigo's falcon, he desired exceedingly to have it

heirs; and then he died. Monna Giovanna, being thus left a widow, went in the summer with this her son into the country (as is the custom with our ladies), to one of her possessions in the neighbourhood of that of Federigo. Wherefore it chanced that this youth began to be intimate with Federigo, and to delight himself in hawks and hounds; and having many times seen the flight of Federigo's falcon, which gave him extreme pleasure, he desired exceedingly to have it; nevertheless he dared not ask it of him, knowing how highly he prized it. Things being thus, the youth fell sick, whereat his mother sorrowed greatly, seeing that he was her all, and that she loved him with all her heart; and throughout the day, remaining by him, she ceased not to comfort him, many times asking him if there were

anything which he desired, praying him to tell it to her; for in sooth, if it were possible for him to have it, she would try her utmost that he should. The youth, after he had heard these offers many times, said—

"Mother mine, if you could arrange that I should have Federigo's falcon, I believe that I would get better straightway."

She, when she heard this, was somewhat at a loss, and began to consider what she should do. She knew that Federigo had long loved her, but had received no single glance from her. Wherefore she said to herself, "How can I send or go and ask for this falcon, which, as I hear, is the best that ever flew, and besides, is the only thing he has to maintain him in the world? How can I be so presumptuous as to wish to

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She, when she heard this, was somewhat at a loss

take it away from a gentleman who has no other pleasure in life remaining to him?" And being perturbed by this thought, although she felt assured of having it if she asked, she did not know what she should say, and stood there without making any reply to her son. But at last her love of him so much overcame her, that she resolved to satisfy him at whatever cost, not by sending, but to go herself for it, and to bring it back to him. She accordingly answered—

"My son, be comforted, and set thy thoughts on getting well at once, for I promise that the first thing I shall do to-morrow will be to go for it and bring it back to thee."

At this the youth so rejoiced that the very same day he showed some improvement.

Next morning, the lady, taking another

lady as her companion, went as if for a walk to the little cottage of Federigo, and asked to see him. Now he, because it was not a time, nor the kind of day, for hawking, was in his garden, seeing to the work there. But when he heard that Monna Giovanna was asking for him at the gate, he gladly ran thither, marvelling much within himself; and when she saw him coming, she advanced to meet him with a courteous readiness, and having politely saluted him, said—

"Good day to thee, Federigo," and went on to say, "I am come to make amends for the losses thou hast already had through me in loving me more than need be; and this is the amends, that I intend to dine with thee this morning in a homely fashion, with this my companion."

Federigo humbly answered, "Lady, no

loss can I remember having ever received from you, but so much good, that if I am worth aught, it has come about through your merit and the love I bear you. And, forsooth, this your friendly visit is more dear to me than if I had once more given me to spend as much as I have already expended ; though in truth it is but to a poor host that you are come."

This said, he led her modestly within his house, and from there conducted her into the garden, where, not having any one to keep her company, he said—

"Lady, since others there are none, this good woman, the wife of that labourer, will bear you company while I go to prepare the table."

Although his poverty was extreme, never till then had he experienced what need it had brought him to, that he had spent all his wealth so immoderately ;

but this morning, finding no single thing by which he could honour the lady for love of whom he had done honour to innumerable men, he was nigh distraught, and full of anxiety he ran hither and thither like a man beside himself, cursing his evil fortune. At length, having no money, and finding no pledge, the hour being late, and his desire great to do honour in some way to the noble lady, and not wishing to make appeal to any one (not even to his own labourer), he cast his eyes upon his good falcon, which stood upon its perch in its hutch, and having no other resource, he took it and found it fat, and it seemed to him a worthy viand for such a lady; and incontinently, without more thought, he twisted its neck, and ordered the kitchen wench to pluck it and put it on the spit and roast it carefully, while he prepared

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Incontinently, without more thought, he twisted its neck

the table with napery most white, for of such he still had some store. Then returning with joyful visage to the lady in his garden, he told her that the repast —such as it was—was ready for her. Whereupon the lady, with her companion, arose and seated herself at table, and without knowing what she was tasting, she ate the good falcon, while Federigo served her with the utmost respect.

After they had risen from table, and had spent some time in pleasant conversation, it seemed to the lady time to say that for which she had come, and turning courteously towards Federigo, she began to speak.

"Federigo, if thou hast in memory thy past life, and my determination, which peradventure thou hast considered hardness and cruelty, I doubt not that thou

wilt marvel at my presumption when thou hast learnt why chiefly I am come; but if thou hadst or hadst had children, thou wouldst know what may be the power of the love we bear them, and I am certain thou wouldst hold me in part excused; however, thou hast none, while I, that have but one, have not been able to escape the laws common to other mothers, which I find myself forced to obey. I thus find myself obliged against my wish, and against all reason and right, to ask of thee as a gift that which I know is to thee most dearly dear, and with reason, since there is no other pleasure or diversion or consolation left thee in the extreme of thy ill fortune. This gift is that falcon of thine, to which my little son is so strongly attached, that if I do not bear it back to him, I fear he will not be able to bear it, such is the

weakness in which he now is, so that through no other thing than this I shall lose him. Therefore I pray thee, not for the love which thou bearest me, as to which thou art in no way obliged to me, but by thy very generosity, which thou hast displayed in courteous usage more than any other man, that thou mayest be pleased to give it to him, so that by that gift I may say that I have received the life of my little son, and through that will be always under obligation to thee."

Federigo, when he heard what the lady demanded, and feeling that he could not help her, because he had given it to her to eat, began in her presence to weep, without having any word to reply to her; the which weeping the lady at first thought came more than aught else from grief at having to part from his good

falcon, and was as much as to say that he was not willing; but nevertheless she contained herself, and waited till he had ended his weeping for Federigo's reply, who thus spake to her—

"Lady, ever since that it pleased God that I should place my love in you, in many things enough has Fortune proved herself my enemy, and much have I grieved thereat; but all such things are as naught in view of that which she has done to me at present, for which I can never have peace with her henceforth: to think that you have come to my poor house here (where, while I was rich, you would not deign to come), and have asked from me a slight gift, and then Fortune has so brought it about that I cannot give it! And why I cannot I will briefly tell. When I heard that you, in your condescension, desired to dine with

me, having regard to your excellency and your merit, I considered it a right worthy and fitting thing that I should honour you with the richest viand within my power—richer than anything else which is generally granted to other persons. Wherefore, bethinking myself of the falcon which you have just asked of me, and of his goodness, I considered him worthy food for you, and this morn you have had him roasted on a platter. And I would have thought him thus best disposed of, but that now I see that you desire him in another fashion, which gives me so great a grief, in that I cannot serve you, that I cannot think evermore to have peace."

This said, he cast before her in witness the wings and feet and beak. And when the lady heard and saw this, at first she blamed him for having killed such a

falcon to give it to eat to a woman, but then within herself she honoured the greatness of his soul, which poverty was not able to abate.

Being thus without hope of having the falcon and of securing the health of her son, all melancholy she departed, and returned to him ; and he, either through grief at not having the falcon, or through the weakness to which he had been brought, passed from this life after a few days, to the great grief of his mother.

Now she, although she remained for some time full of tears and grief, being of great riches and still young, was many times pressed by her brothers to marry again. She, however, did not wish this, but seeing them insist, and remembering the merit of Federigo and his latest piece of generosity, in that he had killed such

a falcon to do her honour, she said to her brothers—

"I would prefer, an you please, to remain as I am, but since it rather pleases you more that I should take a husband, in sooth I will take none other unless I have Federigo degli Alberighi."

At which her brothers, making mock of her, said, "Fool! what is it that thou sayest? How canst thou desire him, that has not a thing in the world?"

And she said to them, "My brothers, I know well that it is as you say, but I prefer to have a man without riches, than to have riches with an apology for a man."

Her brothers, hearing such was her mood, and knowing well that Federigo—however poor he was—was such an one as she wanted, gave her to him with all her riches; and he, seeing that he had

for wife the lady whom he loved so much, and, besides this, becoming rich again through her, ended his years in gladness by her side, taking better care of his fortune.

Here endeth
the Tale of
Sir Federigo's Hawk

Here beginneth the Tale of Isabella

Vaus & Crampton, Sc. *P. 107*

No great time passed before that came to pass which both most desired

ISABELLA

AT a time there lived in Messina three brothers, still youths, but yet merchants, and left passing rich men by the death of their father, who was from San Gimignano. Now they had one only sister, named Isabella, a damsel both beautiful and well bred, whom they had not yet married, for that no occasion had arisen. These three brothers also had in one of their factories a Pisan youth named Lorenzo, who guided and ruled all their affairs ; and it came to pass that, he being very handsome in person and charming in manner, Isabella, after she had seen him many a time and oft, began to take a strange pleasure in him, the said Lorenzo having likewise left all his other loves and begun to fix his mind on her. And the matter went so far that, as they pleased one another equally, no great time passed

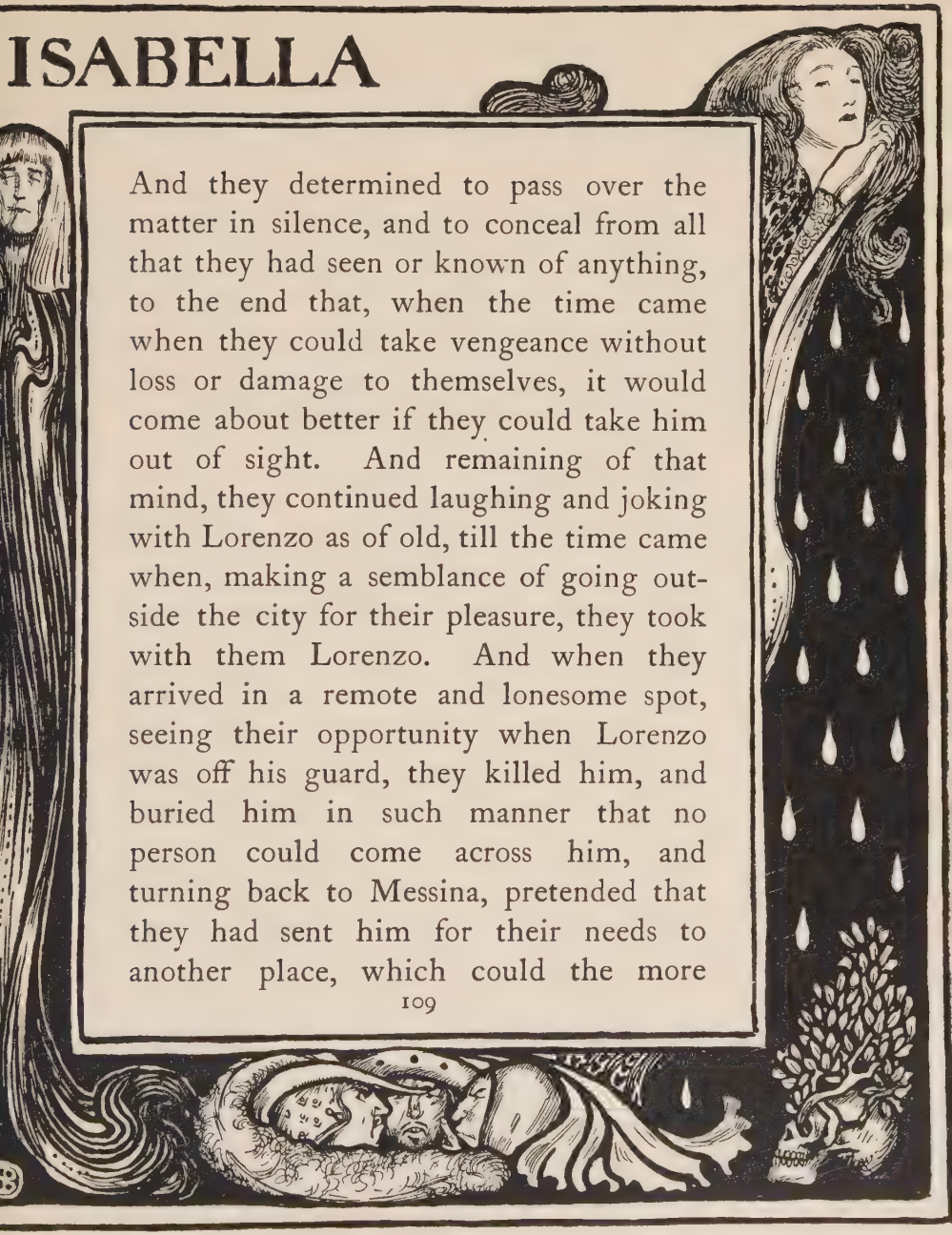
before that came to pass which both most desired.

This continued for some time, and they had exceeding happiness and pleasure, and they kept their secret till one night Isabella going where Lorenzo slept, the eldest of her brothers observed her without being observed himself. But he, since he was a wise youth, although it was of much annoy to him to know that thing, passed the whole night and the following morning thinking various matters with regard to that deed, and saying and doing nothing, so as to take the best course. Then the young man went to his brothers, and told them what he had seen the previous night of Isabella and Lorenzo, and together with them took counsel and thought over the matter, how to avoid that shame should come either to themselves or to their sister.

Vaus & Crampton, Sc. *P 105*

Then the young man, together with his brothers, took counsel

ISABELLA



And they determined to pass over the matter in silence, and to conceal from all that they had seen or known of anything, to the end that, when the time came when they could take vengeance without loss or damage to themselves, it would come about better if they could take him out of sight. And remaining of that mind, they continued laughing and joking with Lorenzo as of old, till the time came when, making a semblance of going outside the city for their pleasure, they took with them Lorenzo. And when they arrived in a remote and lonesome spot, seeing their opportunity when Lorenzo was off his guard, they killed him, and buried him in such manner that no person could come across him, and turning back to Messina, pretended that they had sent him for their needs to another place, which could the more

easily be believed since it was their wont to send him to represent them.

When Lorenzo did not return, and Isabella many times and anxiously asked for him (since the long delay was grievous to her), a day arrived when, at her asking with much insistence, one of her brothers said to her—

"What does this mean? What hast thou to do with Lorenzo, that thou askest about him so often? If thou askest again, we will make thee such a reply as thou wilt not like."

Whereat the damsel, grieving and sadly fearing, she knew not why, refrained from asking any more, but oft passed the night calling piteously upon him, and praying for him to return, and grieved with many tears at his long absence, and remained thus waiting without in any wise recovering her former joy.

Vans & Crampton, Sc. *P. 111*

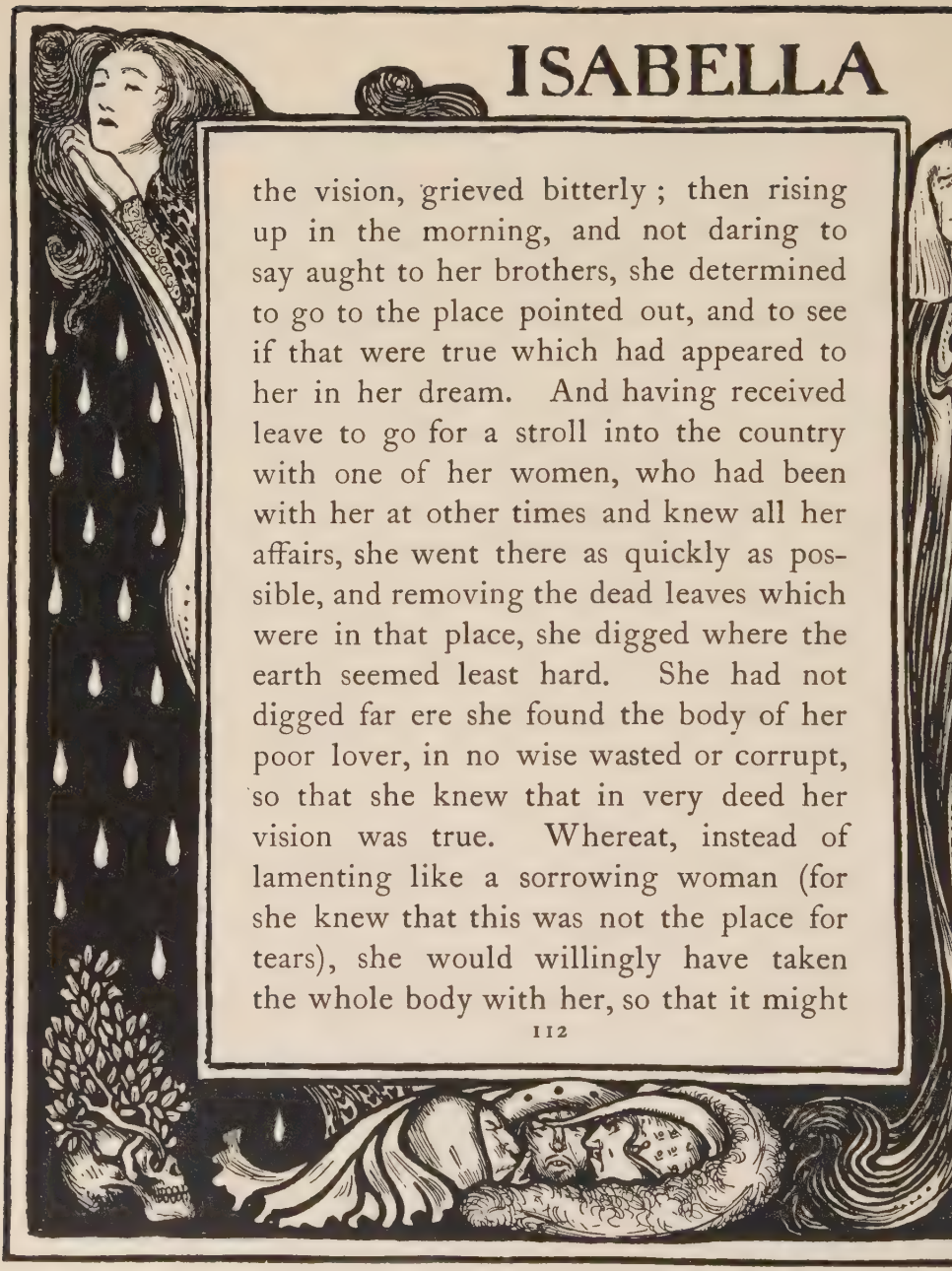
There appeared to her Lorenzo in a dream, pale and distraught

Now there came one night when, having thus greatly grieved for her Lorenzo, that he did not return, she bewept herself asleep at last, and there appeared to her Lorenzo in a dream, pale and distraught, and with all his garments rent and decayed, and it seemed to her that he said—

"Ah, Isabella, thou dost nothing but cry out and sadden thyself at my long absence, and accusest me bitterly with thy tears. Know then, therefore, that I cannot return any more, because on the last day on which thou sawest me thy brothers killed me."

And then, having pointed out the place where they had buried him, he bade her call upon him no more, for that she would never see him again, and thereupon disappeared.

The damsel woke up, and, believing in



the vision, grieved bitterly; then rising up in the morning, and not daring to say aught to her brothers, she determined to go to the place pointed out, and to see if that were true which had appeared to her in her dream. And having received leave to go for a stroll into the country with one of her women, who had been with her at other times and knew all her affairs, she went there as quickly as possible, and removing the dead leaves which were in that place, she digged where the earth seemed least hard. She had not digged far ere she found the body of her poor lover, in no wise wasted or corrupt, so that she knew that in very deed her vision was true. Whereat, instead of lamenting like a sorrowing woman (for she knew that this was not the place for tears), she would willingly have taken the whole body with her, so that it might

Swan Electric, Sc. *P. 113*

She wrapped the head in a cloth, and gave it to her maid-servant to carry

be buried in seemly fashion ; but seeing that this was not possible, she severed the head from the trunk with a knife, as well as she might, and wrapped it in a cloth, and cast the earth again upon the rest of the body, and gave it to her maid-servant to carry in her bosom, and departed therefrom without being seen by any, and returned to her own house. There, regaining her chamber with that head, she wept long and bitterly over it, so that she washed it with her tears, and gave it a thousand kisses in every part. Then she took her a large and shapely pot, in which they used to plant persil or basil, and in it placed the head, covered with a beautiful piece of tapestry, and then she put over it earth, in which she planted seeds of the finest basil of Salerno, nor did she ever water it with any water save of roses or of orange-flowers, or by

her own tears. And it became her wont to sit always near the self-same pot, and she placed all her desire in it, as if it held her Lorenzo in very deed hidden within it. And whenever she had gazed upon it for a time, she would always begin to weep, and that for a long space, so that she would bathe the whole plant with her tears.

The basil, by this long and continuous care, as well as by the richness of the earth proceeding from the corruption of the head which was within it, became most beautiful, and gave forth a most sweet perfume. As she continued this behaviour, she was observed many times by neighbours, and they spake thereof to her brothers, who had begun to marvel at her wasted beauty, and that her eyes appeared sunk into her head, saying, "We have noted this, that she behaves

in such and such a manner day after day." And when they heard this, the brothers assured themselves of the fact, and after they had reproved her for some time without success, they let carry away that pot, all in secret. And when she could not find it again, though she had asked for it time after time with great insistence, and it was not given back to her, from her incessant grief and tears she fell ill and did naught else but ask for that pot in her illness. The young men marvelled much at this demand, and desirous of seeing what was within it, removed the earth, and there saw the cloth, and in it the head, still not consumed away, so that they could see from the curly hair that it was the head of Lorenzo, at which they marvelled much, and feared that the matter would come to light. They thereupon buried it again,

and without saying aught, fled with care from Messina, and having given orders how their affairs should be removed thence, betook themselves to Naples. But Isabella did not cease from weeping, nor from asking for her pot again, and in so weeping died. And thus her misfortunate love had its end.

But thereupon, after a time, the matter became manifest to many, and there was one composed a song, which is sung even at the present day, and thus it begins—

> "No true follower of our Lord was he
> That of my basil bereavèd me."

Vaus & Crampton, Sc *P. 116*

And thus her misfortunate love had its end

Here endeth
the Tale of
Isabella

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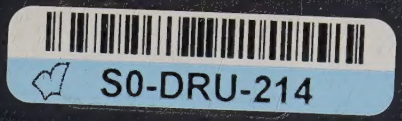
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